



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan
District of Massachusetts

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CONTACT: SAMANTHA MARTIN
PHONE: (617) 748-3139
SAMANTHA.MARTIN@USDOJ.GOV

THREE DEFENDANTS ARRESTED IN REAL ESTATE SCAM

BOSTON, MA - A Sharon man and two women accomplices were arrested yesterday on conspiracy and identity theft charges.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan; Suffolk County District Attorney Daniel Conley; Colonel Mark Delaney, Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police; Commissioner Edward Davis of the Boston Police Department; Peter Zegarac, Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Steven D. Ricciardi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service; Douglas A. Bricker, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation; and Warren T. Bamford, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, announced that **ANDRE J. LAMERIQUE**, 25, of 288 N. Main Street, Sharon, **CARMELLA F. LESSEGUE**, 25, of 317 Wood Avenue, Hyde Park, MA, and **JUDY A. BONAS**, 527 W. 157th Street, New York City, New York, were arrested yesterday on a federal criminal complaint charging them with conspiracy to use stolen identifications to finance the fictitious purchase of a residence in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

According to the affidavit filed in support of the complaint, **LAMERIQUE** constructed a fictitious "sale" of the home of a Dorchester woman in order to obtain funds from a \$440,000 mortgage to finance the purported purchase. The complaint alleges that **BONAS** used a stolen identification to pose as the seller of the Dorchester residence and **LESSEGUE** used a stolen identification to pose as the buyer. Law enforcement learned of the scheme and had an undercover Massachusetts State Trooper act as the attorney who was supposed to close the deal.

All three defendants were arrested and charged in state court after the women participated in the closing of the "sale" at the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds on January 23, 2007. They were initially charged in state court; the Suffolk County District Attorney dismissed those charges today in favor of federal prosecution.

All three defendants appeared in federal court on the charges yesterday afternoon before a U.S. Magistrate Judge. **LAMERIQUE** will remain in custody pending the outcome of the case. **BONAS** and **LESSEGUE** remain in custody until terms for their release can be arranged. If convicted, each defendant faces up to 5 years in prison on the conspiracy charge, and up to 15 years on the identity theft charge, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release and fines of \$250,000 on each count.

The case was investigated by the Massachusetts Financial Crimes Task Force, an inter-agency work group consisting of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the U.S. Secret Service, the Massachusetts State Police, and the Boston Police Department. The ongoing investigation also involves the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Victor A. Wild in Sullivan's Economic Crimes Unit.

The details contained in the complaint are allegations. The defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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